

# Tip of the



## Prevention Information from CSAP's Western Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies

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July 1, 2001

### Skills Needed in Varying Evaluation Situations

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Although we believe that most programs can and should be engaged in their own internal program evaluation activities, there may be occasions when the assistance of an evaluator may be necessary. Here are some situations in which you might want to consider hiring an evaluation consultant or contractor:

1. The evaluation you want to do requires more time than program staff and volunteers can provide.
2. The program is "under fire" from outside critics, and the results of an internal evaluation might be subject to criticism.
3. You need assistance performing the statistical analysis.
4. You need help in designing a questionnaire, survey, or other data collection instruments.
5. Your program is highly complex, and there are major disagreements about the focus of the evaluation.

The kinds of skills you need in an evaluator depends on your program's situation and needs. The following information from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook can help you to identify the kinds of skills you might need in an evaluator, depending on your program's situation.

**Program Situation:** Controversy over the program and how to evaluate it

**Challenge:** Facilitating different points of view

**Evaluator Skills Needed:** Conflict resolutions skills, team-building skills, neutrality & objectivity

**Program Situation:** Highly visible program

**Challenges:** Dealing with publicity, reporting findings in a political environment

**Evaluator Skills Needed:** Public presentation skills, experience with media and politicians, credible reputation and experience

**Program Situation:** Highly dynamic program

**Challenges:** Adapting to rapid changes in context, issues, focus

**Evaluator Skills Needed:** Tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility, skills in qualitative methods, quick learner

**Program Situation:** Collaborative program

**Challenges:** Managing people

**Evaluator Skills Needed:** Team-building skills, ability to focus and direct progress, experience in participatory evaluation

To review the entire W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook, go to:

[www.wkkf.org/Knowledgebase/Publications.asp?Letter=W](http://www.wkkf.org/Knowledgebase/Publications.asp?Letter=W)

For more information on evaluation visit the Western CAPT website at:

[www.open.org/~westcapt/evaluate.htm](http://www.open.org/~westcapt/evaluate.htm) or

CSAP's Decision Support System web site at:  
[www.preventiondss.org](http://www.preventiondss.org) or

The Basic Guide to Program Evaluation web site at:  
[www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/fnl\\_eval.htm](http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm)

Note: Your suggestions for future "Tip of the CAPT" topics are welcome, and may be sent to Ken Smith at [hicapt@lava.net](mailto:hicapt@lava.net).

The six regional CAPTs are funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. For more information on this Tip of the CAPT or other Western CAPT services, please visit our web site: [www.unr.edu/westcapt](http://www.unr.edu/westcapt) or our best practices website: [www.open.org/westcapt](http://www.open.org/westcapt).  
Our toll-free office number is: (888) 734-7476